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August 21, 2009

Via E-mail (bill.storm@state.mn.us) and U.S. Mail

Mr. William C. Storm
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Office of Energy Security, Energy Facility Permitting Division
85 – 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement In the Matter of the Application of Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy for Certificates of Need for the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant for an Extended Power Uprate and Additional Dry Cask Storage; MPUC Dockets: E-002/CN-08-509 and E-002/CN-08-510

Dear Mr. Storm:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security, Energy Facility Permitting Division, (the "DOC"), with comments pertaining to the July 31, 2009, Final Environmental Impact Statement (the "FEIS") regarding the above-referenced matters. These comments are submitted on behalf of the City of Red Wing (the "City"). However, as you are aware, the City did participate in the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant Study Group (the "Study Group") as well as the Advisory Task Force appointed to comment on the scope of the environmental review necessitated by Xcel Energy's applications for an extended power uprate and additional dry cask storage (the "Applications"). As you are equally aware, the Study Group, through its attorney, Paula G. Maccabee, has submitted its own comments regarding the FEIS. These comments are submitted independent of those from the Study Group.

At the outset, the City thanks you for preparing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS"), assimilating and analyzing the comments to the same, and the preparation of the FEIS. In addition, the City appreciates this opportunity to provide additional comments to the FEIS even though it is uncertain, at this time, how these comments will be incorporated into the FEIS or otherwise used to further evaluate the same.

A review of the FEIS reveals that many of the inadequacies and deficiencies that were present in the DEIS still remain and were not addressed. The essential goal of the FEIS is

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to advise the Administrative Law Judge, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, the Minnesota Legislature, and other policy and decisionmakers of the environmental impacts of the proposed Applications, the appropriate alternatives, and certain mitigation steps or efforts that can be taken relative to the same. See Minn. Stat. § 116D.04 subd.2A (2008). The FEIS, or any environmental impact statement prepared under Minn. Stat. § 116D.04, is supposed to present a detailed independent evaluation of the Applications and not simply a regurgitation of the contents of the documents submitted by the applicant. The FEIS, like the DEIS, simply incorporates the broad sweeping statements of Xcel Energy's Applications, especially those portions found in Appendix J, and fails to provide any independent analysis.

In addition, the FEIS, as did the DEIS, defers analysis of many crucial issues under the guise of jurisdiction, duplication, or other like reasons. By doing so, the FEIS undermines its own credibility, especially in the instances where references are made to documents that do not exist (the Federal Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) or that inappropriately defer to federal agencies under the rubric of jurisdiction. As is recognized by the Department of Commerce, Office of Economic Security, the State has jurisdiction over certain items including but not limited to economics and safe, reliable service. See Testimony of Steve Rakow, Evidentiary Hearing, Volume 5, Pages 195-96; See Pacific Gas and Electric Company v. State Energy Security Conservation & Development Commission, 461 U.S. 190, 205 (1983) (with regard to nuclear power, states retain jurisdiction for determining need, reliability, cost, and other related concerns). The FEIS does not, in any way, evaluate the Applications utilizing an appropriate measure that provide guidance to the Minnesota policymakers in determining whether Certificates of Need should issue.

Finally, the FEIS disregards the comments made by sister agencies as well as the comments by the City. Indeed, it is this last category, the comments by the City, that the FEIS truly illustrates its lack of efficiency and compliance with its most fundamental obligation which is to evaluate the environmental *impact* of certain identified events. As is pointed out below, while the FEIS recognizes that the City may not be able to provide an effective emergency response to incidents at the PINGP and/or ISFISI, it does not evaluate what the *impact* of that ineffective response would be upon the environment, natural and human. An effective FEIS would quantify these circumstances.

Regarding the City's specific comments, the City responds as follows:

1. The City of Red Wing is the Primary Responder. In Chapter 1, Page 91, the FEIS references an emergency response plan for potential radiological, non-radiological, and security incidents at the PINGP. As was established during the proceeding before Judge Luis, the City, through its police, fire, and ambulance services, is the primary responder. The Direct and Surrebuttal Testimony of Mr. Roger Hand and Mr. Marshall Hallock, which identified the City as the primary responder, was not, in any way, rebutted or even challenged by Xcel Energy through the testimony, exhibits, or

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witnesses it produced as part of the evidentiary hearing. Accordingly, the FEIS analysis under Chapter 1, Section 4.13, Pages 91-92, is deficient because the City of Red Wing must be identified as the first responder under the various emergency response plans.

In addition, the FEIS, under Chapter 1, Section 4.13, Page 92, is likewise deficient because it fails to address the City's assertion that it will not be able to respond at the level of the most recent emergency exercise completed in July 2008. The unrefutted testimony of Mr. Hand established that this exercise marks an acceptable level for the emergency response plan for the PINGP approved by Xcel Energy, the State, and Federal authorities. *See* Testimony of Roger Hand, Evidentiary Hearing, Volume 5, Page 63-64. If this emergency response plan can not be met, then it is uncertain whether any response to any incident would be effective. While this fact (i.e. lack of effective response) is recognized in numerous other areas in the FEIS, it is not recognized on Page 92. In addition, as argued herein, it is not quantified.

- 2. <u>Acknowledgment of City's Testimony but no Analysis</u>. Throughout Chapter 2 of the FEIS, there is an acknowledgment that the City may not be able to provide an effective response. *See* Chapter 2, Section 5.3, Pages 22, 29, 33-35. However, the FEIS does not analyze the impact of this inability. While it may be difficult to articulate precisely what the impact would be, the FEIS should frame the analysis utilizing certain factors from no response to a response that is less than effective. Accordingly, the FEIS is inadequate for its failure to properly analyze, or, more appropriately, analyze at all, the impact of an emergency response measure that is not effective.
- 3. The FEIS does not Include the Recommendation of the Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security. During the evidentiary hearing, Dr. Steve Rakow, on behalf of the Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security (the "DOC"), offered as testimony a statement relative to the DOC's official position regarding, among other things, the City's ability to provide an effective emergency response plan. Dr. Rakow testified that it would be the recommendation of the DOC, that the Commission recommend that Xcel Energy, at its earliest opportunity, address the issues raised by the City. How this was to be addressed by Xcel Energy and whether this included the City was not material to the DOC, OES. Rather, what was material is that Xcel Energy cure any issues relative to an effective emergency response plan.

This recommendation by a sister agency is and should be recognized within the FEIS when discussing the emergency response plan in Chapter 1, Section 4.13, Pages 91-92 together with, again, an analysis regarding the impact of an ineffective emergency response plan throughout Chapter 2 as well.

4. <u>A Failure of Institutional Control Will Result in the City of Red Wing Overseeing Storage</u>. In Chapter 2, Section 5.4, Pages 38-41, the FEIS examines, among other things, the concept of institutional control. Underlying this analysis of the

institutional control is an effective emergency response plan. However, the FEIS fails to identify that ultimate institutional control (e.g. responsibility) will lie with the City. Both the PINGP and the ISFISI, as they currently exist, lie within the boundaries of the City. Regardless of what happens to Xcel Energy, the disposition of any decommissioning funds, any lawsuit or other action that Xcel Energy may bring to cover certain costs associated with storage of the spent fuel, it is the City that will have responsibility due to the physical locations of the ISFISI. This responsibility will continue long after the operation of the PINGP has ceased and until such time that the spent fuel contained in the casks is removed. The failure to include this analysis in the FEIS is a significant gap in appropriately evaluating and identifying the unique burden that is placed upon the City in this matter.

5. <u>Impact of Disproportionate Tax Base</u>. The FEIS, in Chapter 2, Section 7.3, Page 64, identifies the economic impact to Red Wing in the event the Certificate of Needs are not granted. The FEIS concludes that the failure to grant the Certificates of Need will have a moderate to large negative socioeconomic impact on City through the resulting loss of tax revenue.

However, what is not analyzed is the alternative: if the Certificates of Need are granted, what will be the burden that the City will be required to meet to continue to host the PINGP and the expanded ISFISI? The unrebutted testimony and evidence provided by the City is that the continued operation of the PINGP, while initially providing increased revenue to the City, ultimately will result in the same tax shifting that has occurred over the last ten plus years. During that timeframe, Xcel Energy's property tax payments have decreased significantly. The burden to provide the necessary and critical public safety services has shifted to the private, residential citizens and other businesses of the City. In addition, the supposed property tax increase resulting from upgrades to the PINGP if the Certificates of Need are granted may not occur at all. As testified to by Xcel Energy witness Joe Rheinberger, Xcel Energy, through the use of pollution control tax exemptions, could exempt most if not all of the proposed upgrades to the PINGP. This would result in no additional tax increase to the City and, in effect, could reduce the taxes paid by Xcel Energy for the PINGP further. The failure of the FEIS to appropriately examine this issue likewise is a deficiency.

- 6. <u>Maintenance</u>. Notwithstanding the City's comments to the DEIS seeking an analysis of the proposed maintenance program for the ISFISI, the FEIS does not address the same. The failure to do so is a fault in the FEIS since appropriate maintenance has a direct impact on any threatened release.
- 7. <u>Longevity of Storage</u>. While the FEIS does, in part, analyze the longevity of the storage of the spent fuel outside of the PINGP, it does not do so in any meaningful fashion. Instead, the longevity issue and costs associated with the same are bundled and lost under a discussion of institutional control and effective maintenance. However, these

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concepts (institutional control, maintenance, and longevity) must be separated and evaluated individually since each has its own risks and costs that must be evaluated.

8. <u>Public Hearing Comments.</u> In response to the FEIS, the Red Wing City Council conducted a public hearing whereby members of the city and other interested parties has the opportunity to comment on the FEIS. These comments, which are incorporated into this letter and should receive the same weight as all other comments set out herein, are set forth in the Addendum attached to this letter. It should be noted that these comments represent a summarization of those made at the public hearing and have not been discussed, debated or adopted by the Red Wing City Council.

The FEIS, like the DEIS, fails its essential purpose. It does not provide a detailed analysis of the proposed Applications and their potential impact as well as the steps that could be taken to mitigate the same. While there is, on many levels, a recognition of the sophisticated issues surrounding nuclear power and the by-products of the same, there is not any meaningful analysis on the impact of the same to the State and its citizens.

The poignancy of this issue is reflected by the lack of analysis of the issues surrounding the continued storage of spent fuel. As was requested by the Task Force, there must be a timeline of funding and a detailed plan for maintenance, inspection, repair, and replacement, if necessary, of the casks and other support systems in and around the PINGP. While strides were taken to identify these issues, the analysis is lacking and therefore the FEIS, as a tool for policymakers, is insufficient.

I thank you for your time and cooperation and your consideration of these comments.

Very truly yours,

MADIGAN, DAHL & HARLAN, P.A.

Monas R. Harlayes

Thomas P. Harlan

TPH/brc
Attachment

Final Environmental Impact Statement In the Matter of the Application of Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy for Certificates of Need for the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant for an Extended Power Uprate and Additional Dry Cask Storage; MPUC Dockets: E-002/CN-08-509 and E-002/CN-08-510

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Bianca Calatayud, hereby certify that I have this 21st day of August, 2009 served a true and correct copy of the following document(s):

Correspondence dated August 21, 2009 to William C. Storm with attached addendum from the City of Red Wing

by efiling and by placing a true and correct copy thereof in the U.S. Mail (in the manner specified below), to the following individuals:

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Luis	Richard C.	Office of Administrative Hearings	PO Box 64620 St. Paul, MN-551640620 ,USA	Paper Service	Yes



On August 19, 2009 the Red Wing City Council met at a Special City Council Meeting to take public comment on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Xcel Energy's Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant Extended Power Uprate and Additional Dry Cast Storage Projects

- A. PUC Docket Number: E002/CN-080509 (Certificate of Need Extended Power Uprate)
- B. PUC Docket Number: E002/CN-080509 (Certificate of Need Additional Dry Cask Storage)
- C. PUC Docket Number: E002/CN-080509 (Site permit Extended Power Uprate)

Council Members Present: Council President Mike Schultz, Council Members Dean Hove, Dan Bender, Carol Duff, Ralph Rauterkus, and Lisa Bayley.

In addition, Mayor John Howe and Council Administrator Kay Kuhlmann were in attendance.

Council President Mike Schultz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He welcomed the public and explained the purpose of the special meeting indicating it was for the public to provide comment on the above mentioned Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), and for the Council to finalize a letter to be sent as a comment to the statement.

There were several citizen in the audience but no one chose to speak at this time. Mike Schultz asked the City Council to share any general thoughts on the FEIS before the Council got into a more detailed discussion.

Council Member Lisa Bayley said that generally speaking was disappointed in the final EIS. It didn't address many of the City's concerns identified during the Draft EIS comment process.

Council President Mike Schultz stated that in the past the City Council has indicated support for other groups that are recognized as interveners in this process. He further stated that tonight the City Council Members are just speaking on behalf of the City.

Council President Mike Schultz said that City Council has stated emphatically that one of their primary concerns is the storage issue and the City's ability to address the public safety needs of residents. The report failed to address City concerns with regard to



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either issue, and specifically didn't give the City any comfort on the long term storage issue.

Mayor John Howe said he agreed with Council Member Bayley and that his area of concern is the impact on the socio-economic factors. Mayor Howe did not feel the report went far enough to discuss important issues to the culture and sustainability of Red Wing, such as the ice thickness on Lake Pepin. Mayor Howe suggested that long term residents could provide plenty of detail on how the ice thickness has changed since the plant has operated. The study states there is no correlation. Mayor Howe stated that if they had indicated that they could find 'no' correlation, that would be one thing, but they went so far as to say the issue was examined and found to be 'no correlation'.

Mayor John Howe felt that ice thickness issue was not studied enough and that the study did not go back far enough to gather statistics from the pre-Xcel plant years.

Council Member Carol Duff elaborated on the ice accumulation issue and referenced the chart that shows the data gathered; the data starts in 1990, which is after the plant was operational.

Council President Mike Schultz asked Council Member Carol Duff if she would lead the Council and citizens in a detailed examination of the study, as she has spent a great deal of time on this issue over the year.

Council Member Carol Duff had the following concerns:

- On Page VI, the statement says there will be an increase of gaseous radionuclides emission of not more than 10 percent. This is within limits, but there is an increase and this is disconcerting.
- Skyshine radiation is a concept that the public may not understand, but it's when
 radiation reflects back into the atmosphere. This can be somewhat mitigated by
 shielding of the casks. This is also a concern.
- Red Wing receives its water the same aquifer as Xcel draws from. There are six wells that Xcel uses to test for radiation. If there is a radiation contamination this would ruin the water source for the City of Red Wing. Although the current readings are well within the limits, Council Member Duff feels the City Council should have access to the regular monitoring reports.
- There is a concern with the chlorination process used to address bacteria. This is referenced on Pages 48-49. Here again, as a local elected official she feels the City Council Members should have the right to know when chlorination is occurring, and what threats it presents to the river.



- The reference to land controls from Goodhue County, Dakota County and Pierce County seems to slight the City, when the City has land use control. The Xcel plant lies within the City limits.
- Page 86 and the discussion of the bead resins and filters is incomplete because there is no reference to how these were taken off site and what the protections were.
- A major concern has been the increased number of casks, especially now that our Country does not have a plan for a federal repository. Who is going to be responsible for the casks that are left there when Xcel decommissions? There is also a concern about the increased heat from the casks.
- Increased temperature is an overall concern. Council Member Carol Duff said we trust Xcel, but we as a City have a responsibility to look out for our citizens.

Council Member Dan Bender mentioned a couple points that he wanted to bring up. On Page 19, it talks about the larger diameter fuel rods that will be used. He explained that he understood that the larger diameter fuel rods are creating more heat and steam and that this is what will be used to generate more electricity. This is also the basis for why additional piping is necessary. The switch to the new fuels will be prior to the extended uprate. Xcel applied for the NRC approval and would allow for the conversion by July 2009. His concern is that Xcel is beginning to use the new fuel before all these impacts are known.

A second comment by Council Member Dan Bender refers to drinking water monitoring (Page 85). His concern is with spikes in tritium. There is a reference to what 'might' cause the spikes, but it's unknown.

Council Member Carol Duff talked about a contradiction regarding the cooling tower needing to be higher, when in another part of the report it states that there is no need for the tower to be extended.

Council President Mike Schultz said he concurred with Carol that the City would like the well reports, and that he also agreed with her with regard to her comment on land use control. He also felt there should be a referenced to the nearness to the Prairie Island Tribal Community.

Council President Mike Schultz reiterated that the City Council's primary concern has been permanency. Although the report gives the casks a term that is contradictory – permanent/temporary, he cannot see anything that is temporary. He reiterated that the casks are not temporary. That if a person is born today and lives to be 85 years old, and the casks remain there, that is not a temporary situation.



Council President Mike Schultz concurred with Council Member Bender's comments about tritium.

Council Member Lisa Bayley addressed the last part of the statement where it states that there are new responses to the City's comments made during the draft EIS comment period. In Comment 25-1, it says that the text has been modified to address the City's concern. Council Member Bayley does not believe there is any new verbiage there. In comment 25-2 it addresses the storage as temporary permanent and explains that this is not a legal term, but a description because of the situation. Because of the federal responsibilities for long term storage, the casks are labeled temporary; but because the Yucca project has been delayed, its permanent.

Council Member Ralph Rauterkus said his issues are right in line with the other Council member's comments about the confusing terminology of temporary/permanent.

Council Member Carol Duff commented on what Ralph said. It's her understanding, that if Yucca Mountain were ready to take casks right now, it would be full because of all the nuclear waste currently waiting to be permanently stored. All new nuclear waste casks will not have a placed to go.

Mayor John Howe stated that when the City and state first agreed to have the fuel stored on site at Prairie Island, it was understood that Yucca would be built, open and accepting fuel by now.

Mayor John Howe added that when he looks at the FEIS, he feels the report is inadequate because it doesn't address a non-removal of dry casks scenario. It also doesn't address any externalities. It's easy to say it's a federal issue or responsibility, but in essence we feel it is ours until the Federal Government steps up and takes the casks. John said he is suggesting that there should be funds, maybe not at the City level, but at the state level, to address a non-removal situation.

Each reactor uses 600 gallons a minute go through those two reactors. Ten percent goes into evaporation. The FEIS does not take into account impact on water flow. I also think the report is incomplete on the risks to the surrounding communities. The report should address the impact on our socio-economic issues if there is an incident. From a tourism standpoint, if the ice gets thinner and we lose the ability to ice fish that will have a negative effect on the branding of our community and the tourism industry.

Council Member Carol Duff said Mayor Howe alluded to protection on a state level against the transfer of other casks into the state, but there is no protection from the Monticello casks coming into our site or if another nuclear facility is built that those casks would come to the Red Wing site. Council Member Lisa Bayley said she didn't



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think that issue would be addressed in this report. State law only allows for storage of waste generated on that site.

Council President Mike Schultz went back to public comment, asking if there is anyone present who would like to comment. He asked for names, addresses and the limit to the three minute rule.

Sue Elker, 951 Pioneer Road, Red Wing, MN. She was under the understanding that the City would be working on a final letter. There is no final decision at this point; the City doesn't make the final decision on the extension of the extension of the license. Xcel doesn't have to apply to the City. They apply to the state and/or federal government. The City has intervened to be a part of the process on two very specific issues. We have said we support the extension, but we have expressed some concerns.

Sue further went on to say that Xcel has been a good neighbor and a good employer. Council President Mike Schultz said some of the stuff the City is asking for is just for the City to get some assurance.

Council Member Carol Duff said that simply because we have noted something in the report is that we are against something. The City wants a plan in place – a plan that will help the City and Xcel to continue with good relationships.

Christian Eide Tollefson of Frontenac, MN. She appreciated the time to speak to the report. She is very appreciative of the issues. She read through our comments and doesn't have to much add to the comment. She is very concerned about the wording creating a poor legal argument with regarding to the temporary permanent issue.

She added one thing to the discussion of the temporary permanent statement and said it completely overlooks the federal statute. It states very clearly that until the federal government removes the waste, the utility has the obligation.

She also had an issue with the accumulative effect to analyze the effect on the environment. If we don't get a handle on this now we won't be able to deal with them in the future.

The other major concern is to look at possible mitigations. She doesn't understand why the staff hasn't addressed this. She had checked with the EQB and she is correct that the mitigation should be addressed.

She hoped there was more information on sky shine. Sky shine is increased by the heat. Other utilities have had to do additional shielding to protect the environment.



There is no viable local government without safe water and air. Knowing that the wells are monitored by the City and the information could be shared is a common concern.

Council Member Carol Duff commented on Kristin's statement that throughout the study the assumption is that the increases are linear – they have not considered the accumulative affect.

Kristin added another comment about the aging containment pool. That is a concern.

Mayor John Howe asked for a better explanation about gamma rays. Kristin explained how they worked.

Council Member Mike Schultz entertained a motion to go into closed session to close the meeting to discuss strategy as it relates to this issue.

Council Member Ralph Rauterkus moved, seconded by Council Member Dan Bender and unanimously carried, to go into closed session.